



By the King.



It is a thing notorious that many of the meanest sort of our people in diuers parts of our kingdome, either by secret combination, wrought by some wicked instruments, or by ill example of the first beginners, haue presumed lately to assemble themselves riotously in multitudes, and being armed with sundry weapons, haue layd open in forcible maner a great quantitie of seuerall mens possessions, some newly enclosed, and others of longer continuance, making their pretence that some towne haue been depopulated, and diuers families vndone by meanes of such Enclosures. In which seditious courses they haue persisted not onely after many prohibitions by our Ministers in the seuerall Counties, but after particular Proclamations published by our Royal Authoritie, & which is more, when so many meanes of lenitie and gentlenesse were offered to reclaime them, as no Prince would haue vsed, but such a one as was both confident in the loyall affections of his Subjects in generall, and compassionate towards the simplicitie of such Offenders: many of them stood out most obstinately, and in open field rebelliously resisted such forces as in Our name, and by Our authoritie came to repressse them, whereupon insued by necessitie in the end that some blood was brayden as well by martiall Execution, as by ciuil Justice.

Upou this accident it seemeth good vnto Vs to declare to the world, and specially to Our louing Subjects, as well that which concerneth Our affections (which vpon seuerall respects are diuided betweene comfort and griefe) as that which concerneth also Our Princely intentions, which likewise are bent vpon the contrary objects and courses of Grace and Justice. For first of all we finde cause of comfort in our selues in regard of the clearenesse of Our conscience (to whome God hath committed the care and supreme Gouernment of Our people) from giuing cause or colour of such complaint; the matter whereof is such, as wee take Our selues more interested therein then any our Subjects can bee: For as wee cannot but know, that the glorie and strength of all Kings consisteth in the multitude of Subjects, so may wee not forget that it is a speciall and peculiar preheminence of those Countreies, ouer which God hath placed Vs, that they do excell in breeding and nourishing of able and seruiceable people, both for warre and peace, which wee doe iustly esteeme aboue all Treasure and Commodities, which our said dominions do otherwise so plentifully yeeld vnto Vs. Neither in this particular case of depopulation, can any man make doubt but it must bee farre from our inclination to suffer any tolleration of that which may bee any occasion to decay or diminish our people, if wee did consider nothing else, but that vse and application which wee

may make (as other Princes do) both of the bodies of our people to carrie armes for defence of our Crowne, and of their goods and substance to supply our wants vpon all iust & reasonable occasions, so as we may by many reasons sufficiently iustifie our care herein towards God & the World (forasmuch as apperteineth to our Kingly Office) seeing the said Inclosures (lawfull or vnlawfull) were all or the most part made before we had taken the Scepter of this Government into our possession. Whereunto we may adde (as wholly cleansing and washing our hands from the tolleration of these grieuances) the continuall and strict charges and commandements giuen by vs to our Judges and Iustices, for the care and reformation of those things which may bee in any wise grieuous to our people in their severall Countreys, although in this point there is some defence alledged by our subordinate Ministers, and specially by the Iustices of Assise, that our people haue beene Wanting to themselves in the due and ordinary meanes which they ought to take, by presentment of such as are or haue beene guilty of these oppressions. But as wee take comfort that the causes of these complaints haue not proceeded from our Government, hauing contrariwise (before these seditious courses first brake forth) taken into our Princely consideration this matter of depopulating and decaying of Townes and Families (whereof we are more sensible, then any other) with resolution to cure whatsoeuer is amisse, by iust and orderly remedies: So are wee grieved to behold what the disloyalty and obstinacy of this rebellious people hath forced vs vnto, who being naturally inclined to spare shedding of blood, could haue wished that the humble and voluntary submission and repentance of all those Offenders, might both haue prevented the losse of the life of any one of them, and the example of Justice vpon some might haue prevented the losse of more. And seeing it was of such necessity, that some in regard of their intollerable obstinacy in so pernicious Treason should perish, rather then the sparkes of such a fire in our Kingdome should be left vquenched, that it may yet serue to put others in mind of their duetie, and saue them from the like ruine and destruction, for such and so Traiterous attempts hereafter: In all which considerations, for that which may concerne our owne Royall intention, as wee would haue all men know and conceiue, that neither the pretence of any Wrongs receiued, nor our great dislike of depopulation in generall, can in any wise stay vs any longer, from a seuerer and iust prosecution of such as shall take vpon them to be their owne iudges and reformers, either in this or any other pretended grieuance: So on the other side, we are not minded that the offences of a few (though iustly prouoking our Royall indignation) shall alter our Gracious disposition to giue reliefe in this case, where it apperteineth, were it for none other cause, then in respect of so many others our good and louing Subiects, which might haue alledged like cause of grieue, and neuerthelesse haue contained themselves in their due obedience.

And therefore wee doe first declare and publish our Princely resolution, That if any of our Subiects shall heereafter vpon pretences of the same or like grieuances, either persist in the vnlawfull and rebellious Act already begun, or renewe and brake forth into the like, in any parts of our Kingdome: we will prefer the safetie, quiet, and protection of our Subiects in generall, and of the body of our State, before the compassion of any such Offenders, bee they more or lesse, and howsoeuer misled: and must forget our naturall clemency by pursuing them with all seuerity for their so hainous Treasons, as well by our Armes as Lawes, knowing well, that we are bound (as the head of the politike body of our Realme) to follow the course which the best Philisians vse in dangerous diseases, which is, by a sharpe remedy applyed to a small and infected part, to saue the whole from dissolution and destruction. To which ende we doe accordingly charge and command all our Lieutenants, Deputie Lieutenants, She-



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riffes, Iustices of Peace, and all other Magistrates of Justice vnder Us, and all other our loving Subiects to Whom it shall any Wayes appertaine, to doe and imploy their vttermost endeavours and forces for the keeping of our Subiects in peace and obedience, for prevention of all such riotous and rebellious Assemblies, and destroying them, (if any doe remaine, or shall happen to arise) by force of Armes, and by execution (euen to present death) of such as shall make resistance.

On the other side we doe notific and declare to all our loving Subiects, That we are resolved, not out of any apprehension or regard of these tumults and disorders (which wee know well to be only dangerous to those that attempt them, and which experience may teach them, that they are in a momēt to be dispersed) nor to satisfie disobedient people, be they rich or poore: But meerely out of loue of Justice, Christian compassion of other of our Subiects, who being likewise touched with this grieffe, auoyded the like offences, As also out of our Princely care and prouidence to preserve our people from decay or diminution, To cause the abuses of Depopulations and vnlawfull Inclosures to be further looked into, and by peaceable and orderly meanes to establish such a reformation thereof, as shall bee needfull for the iust reliefe of those that haue iust cause to complaine, and therein neglect no remedy, which either the lawes of our Realme doe prescribe, or our owne Royall Authority, with the aduice of our Councell can supply.

For which purpose wee haue already assembled our Judges, and giuen them in charge straightly, to make it one of their principall cares aswell to discover the said offences, as to consider how farre they may be touched in law, and in what course, and accordingly to proceede against them with all seueritie. And yet because the execution thereof requireth some time, though no more then must of necessitie bee employed therein, if any turbulent or seditious spirits by their impatience, or through their desire to satisfie their owne wicked humors, by mouing common troubles shall seeke to prevent the course of Justice by any such vnlawfull attempts, as haue beene lately vsed, and abusing our gracious disposition shall take the presumption to be Reformers of the said inconuenience by any force, because they perceiue hereby how much we mislike of it: we doe once againe denounce vnto them the same seuerer punishment, which belongeth to Rebels in the highest degree, And doe require all and euery our Magistrates, Officers and Ministers of Justice (according to their place of authoritie) and all our loyall Subiects according to their duety of assistance (laying aside all slackenes or fond pittie) to see it duely put in execution: As on the other side we doe promise, and are resolved graciously to lend our eares to humble and iust complaints, and to affoord our people Justice and fauour both in this and all occasions fit for a King to doe for his good Subiects in generall and in particular.

Giuen at our Mannour of Greenewich the xxviii. day of Iune, in the fifth yeere of our Reigne of Great Britaine, France and Ireland.

*God saue the King.*

 Imprinted at London by Robert Barker,

Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie.

ANNO DOM. 1607.